marked longevity; with the former, the danger increases, rapid destruction and decrease in numbers/*

When my cat catches a bird it is invariably, rather than a sparrow, a warbler.

17 June

Mius is gaining skill in hybridizing certain flowers; and I have finally succeeded in convincing him that, in the beds of seedlings thus obtained, the least robust varieties often gave the most beautiful flowers. But it is only with great difficulty that I can get him to set aside the common, vigorous varieties that can get along without his attentions, in order to favor those that are harder to cultivate and require his care.

If, among her artists, Greece does not count a single Spartan, is this not because Sparta threw her puny children into pits?

Impossible to get Mius to admit that, in order to assure selection, it is not enough to prefer the delicate and rare variety, that its difficult victory over the commoner varieties must be assured by suppressing the latter in its vicinity.

To avoid argument, he pretends to clear my garden of them; but I find them a little later, transplanted in some corner, just as rugged as the rare variety is fragile, and infinitely prolific. In less than two years they have won back their place; the exquisite has disappeared, stifled by the commonplace. Because, for flowers too, "the exquisite is as difficult as it is rare"; and however beautiful the most modest flower of the fields may be, one's heart weeps to think that the most beautiful always has the least chance of survival. It is at one and the same time the least gifted for the struggle and the one that most arouses appetites and jealousies. Oh, if only man, instead of so often contributing to the spreading of the vulgar, instead of systematically pursuing with his hatred or his cupidity the natural ornament of the earth, the most colorful butterfly, the most charming bird, the largest flower; if he brought

his ingenuity to bear on protecting, not on destroying but on favoring — as I like to think that people do in Japan, for instance, because it is so very far from France! . . .

Were a miracle to produce in our woods some astounding orchid, a thousand hands would stretch out to tear it up, to destroy it. If the blue-bird happens to fly past, every gun is sighted; and then people are amazed that it is rare!

Winged, plumed, down-covered seeds, wrapped in lusciousness and attracting the bird! what ingenuity each plant shows in scattering its progeny as far as possible from itself!

. A giant parsley bends its enormous stem terminated by the umbel